Abstract

A method of forming a microporous fluoropolymer membrane, comprising the steps of:

irradiating a sheet of fluoropolymer at a dosage level below the rupture energy of the carbon-to-fluorine (C-F) bonds of the fluoropolymer, but sufficient to rupture carbon-to-carbon (C-C) bonds; and

exposing the sheet of fluoropolymer to an etchant for a period of time sufficient to etch away disrupted atoms and molecules, wherein continuous micropassages are formed through the sheet.